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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 002874

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN
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STATE FOR DS/ITA (KHALL) AND DS/IP/WHA (MFLYNN)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/30/2014

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [KJUS](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KSAC](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN MILITARY INTELLIGENCE FEELS POLICE
RUSHING IN PINNING BUS MASSACRE BLAME ON MARA SALVATRUCHA
GANG

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 2841

[1](#)B. USDAO TEGUCIGALPA 241424Z DEC 04

Classified By: Ambassador Larry Palmer;
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Honduran military intelligence chief COL Efrain Ochoa met at his request December 30 with AMB and DCM to discuss his concerns about public statements made by President Ricardo Maduro, Minister of Public Security Oscar Alvarez, and top police officials about the massacre of 28 people in a bus in San Pedro Sula December 23. Specifically, COL Ochoa said military intelligence believed that statements that the Mara Salvatrucha gang was responsible for the attack were premature and not yet supported by available evidence. He said it was far from conclusive that the nine suspects currently being held, including principal suspect and Mara Salvatrucha gang leader, Darwin Alexis Ramirez Hernandez, were involved in the attack. COL Ochoa claimed that one survivor of the massacre stated that the attackers in their actions, demeanor, and appearance, did not appear to be gang members. COL Ochoa said that they appeared to be people who had received military training, and not just criminals. COL Ochoa said military intelligence did not know who was responsible for the attack.

[1](#)2. (C) COL Ochoa said the rush to judgment was convenient, in keeping with the GOH's anti-gang focus, but may be wrong and in any event gave a false sense of security to the populace. COL Ochoa reiterated public statements made by Honduran Army Commanding General Orlando Velasquez that accusations that a military officer had supplied weapons to the attacker were wrong. The name of the alleged culprit (Angel Humberto Urquia) was not of a military officer but rather an ex-police deputy inspector. COL Ochoa also said damning statements about the alleged involvement of Judge Mirian Barahona may be premature. Such statements stained the image of GOH institutions and the country's image, he said.

[1](#)3. (C) COL Ochoa said military intelligence had received information about possible future attacks on police and/or military targets in San Pedro Sula and Siguatepeque, and on the Presidential Palace in Tegucigalpa. The military has not been able to corroborate these alleged planned attacks.

[1](#)4. (C) Meanwhile, Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime Doris Aguilar has informally requested technical assistance on this case. Post may soon receive a formal request for assistance from her boss, Attorney General Ovidio Navarro, or Minister of Public Security Alvarez.

[1](#)5. (C) Begin Comment: Aguilar's request suggests that the case against the suspects arrested so far may not be as strong as GOH officials have stated publicly, a view corroborated by COL Ochoa. Post will monitor closely developments in this case. End Comment.
Palmer